

# Director's Remarks, February 2011

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## Performance

Circulation of library materials is steadily increasing. According to statistics, Ooltewah/Collegedale and Eastgate libraries both had an increase of several hundred items checked out over January of last year. Downtown and South Chattanooga libraries still trail last year's figures. Once again the overall difference is compensated by the increase in on-line renewals. Northgate Library has seen a boom in circulation. They surpassed last year's January figures by over 1,600 items checked out for a whopping total of 18,483 items.

## Automation

The library is now on the Polaris Library Automation System. Our "Go Live" date was February 9. Patron and item records were transferred successfully. We are working on some data problems that migrated from our old CARL system. When CARL pulled data on overdue fines on many of the patron records, the names of the overdue items associated with those fines were not transferred. When front line staff are unable to provide information for what the patron is being charged, it makes for an extremely sticky situation.

## Collection Agency

The City of Chattanooga contract with AllianceOne Collection Agency expires February 17, 2011. The City has signed a new collections contract with National Recovery System (NRS). The library falls under this contract. In a conference call with officials from NRS, Chief Financial Officer Daisy Madison, and other departmental supervisors it was noted that 6 years is the legal limit on collections in Tennessee and 4 years in the state of Georgia. Older debts can be requested but cannot be turned over to credit reporting or other legal action. Before submitting patron names with overdue books and fines to the new collection agency, I will prepare a report to the board on the number of patrons with fines and the amount of fines owed by year.

## Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Library Executive Council recently budgeted \$1,000 per branch and \$500 for the library bookstore for 2011. I am authorized to approve purchases from these funds, if individual amounts do not exceed \$250. The Friends approved budgets submitted by Lee Hope, the Children's Coordinator, for the Children's Department renovation and the Target Author Grant. Since these budgets are now pre-approved, we will not have to submit a request for each individual item. The Friends also approved funds for the establishment of Club Lib as an independent 501 (c)(3) organization to be called, Club Lib – Friends of the Public Library.

## **Reorganization & Downtown repairs**

I am happy to report that the repair of the roof over the Children's Department has been completed. The renovation of the Children's Department can now proceed without risk of water damage. A new drop ceiling is first on the schedule of renovations, followed by painting the walls and the laying of new carpet.

The accent walls on all three floors have been painted. Framed tapestries were brought out of storage to hang on the second floor. The tapestries have book-themed scenes and were originally woven for the library through a 1941 WPA federal art project grant.

## **Downtown Library elevator**

Elevator bids have been submitted and reviewed. It is my recommendation that the board award the elevator upgrade contract to Chattanooga Elevator for the amount of \$172,400. A lower bid was submitted by Otis Elevator but included a five page list of "Bid Qualifications/Clarifications." Our elevator engineer consultant, Randy Metcalf, recommends that the lower bid from Otis Elevator be rejected since the bid does not meet specifications. I have also consulted with the City of Chattanooga Manager of Real Property, Dan Thornton, and that is also his recommendation. See attached supporting documents.

Completion of the work on the elevator is estimated to take 12 to 16 weeks. I would like the board to award the elevator upgrade contract to Chattanooga Elevator so that they can immediately proceed with ordering the equipment needed.

Submitted by Eva M. Johnston, Interim Director